 Anthropolgy 202A (Proseminar A)

The History of Anthropological Theory: Society, Culture, and Disciplinarity

Fall, 2011 (course code 60700)

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Meets Tuesdays, noon–2:50pm, SBS 3323
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10am–noon, SBS 3322
First meeting: Tuesday, September 27, noon, SBS 3323

Course Description

This is the first quarter of the three-quarter proseminar sequence required for graduate students in the Ph.D. program in anthropology. In this term, students will explore the history of anthropological theory and ethnographic practice. It is organized around an in-depth discussion of the relation (or lack of one) between notions of culture and notions of society in the formation of anthropology as an academic discipline and mode of inquiry. The course will pay particular attention to the emergence of anthropology out of nineteenth-century concerns over the nature of the “primitive” and evolutionary theory, and continue with the formalization and institutionalization of the discipline throughout the twentieth century. The course will also attend to some of the discipline’s internal and external criticisms and reformulations, as well as the debates over its core analytical concepts.

Traditionally, the history of anthropological theory has been taught in terms of “national traditions,” focusing on the rise of theory in three or four national settings (generally, Britain, France, the United States, and Germany). The rationale of this course is different. Although the course will attend to the major national traditions, it is organized in terms of cross-national debates and dialogues as well as the changing political and economic circumstances in which the discipline has developed. Preoccupations with genealogical reason, gender/kinship, and racial formation cross-cut the “national” traditions, as does anthropology’s liberal humanist philosophical roots. The course will also address feminist theories in anthropology, the problematics of theories as they play out in different seats of intellectual production, and imperial nations’ encounters with, and constructions of, the colonial subjects who were so often the objects of anthropological inquiry.

This course is open only to first-year graduate students in the Ph.D. program in the Irvine Department of Anthropology. It places large demands on graduate students’ time. The course is reading-intensive and writing-intensive, and students will need to learn to skim productively.
The course also requires attendance at three Friday evening seminars, at locations to be announced in class, which aim to provide an opportunity to talk in a more relaxed, informal setting, and hopefully to lay the groundwork for future productive collaborations.

You will need to obtain the following books. (Note: some of the older books exist in multiple editions. You do not need to obtain the specific edition listed here. They will also all be placed on course reserves at the library.)


Recommended:

Note: All other course readings (even the ones that are books) will be available either online or as PDF files provided in class.

**Course Requirements**

**Attendance and participation:** Weekly attendance is absolutely vital. The class will be run as a seminar, with occasional short introductory lectures. Your attentive and engaged participation in class discussions is required. While the assigned reading will be a challenge (until you understand how to read productively), you should attend class and participate in class discussions regardless of how much of the reading you have finished. I will only accept absences in cases of dire emergency.

There will be three Friday seminars during the quarter, at times and locations to be announced. We will have dinner and you will read the ethnography assigned for that seminar and be prepared to engage in discussion about it.
3 short essays (2,500 words maximum, all-inclusive) will be due emailed to tboellst@uci.edu before the listed course meeting date. I will distribute some suggested prompts or questions each week for the next week’s readings. Your paper can either address one or more of those prompts, or reflect your own critical and analytical questions about the assigned readings. No late papers will be accepted. Each counts for 16% of your final grade.

Course meeting discussion facilitation: Each students will be responsible for helping to facilitate one course meeting. This involves a brief (5 minutes) introduction to the authors and their intellectual biographies, and how they relate to themes from the course. Course meeting discussion facilitation accounts for 10% of your final grade.

Friday seminar discussion facilitation: Teams of students will be responsible for facilitating discussion for one Friday seminar. Facilitators should be prepared with a list of questions designed to generate discussion. Discussion facilitation will account for 10% of your final grade.

Take-home final examination: There will be an essay-format, take-home final examination distributed during Week 9 and due emailed to tboellst@uci.edu BY 5pm on Friday, December 15. It will account for 32% of your final grade. NO INCOMPLETES WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR THIS CLASS.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Orientations
Stocking, George W., Jr.

Week 2: 19th Century Evolutionary Theories and Armchair Ethnology (Oct 4)
Frazer, James George

Maine, Henry Sumner

Spencer, Herbert
Tylor, Edward Burnett

Friday Seminar: Margaret Mead, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies. (OCT 7)

Week 3: Durkheim, Mauss, and the Category of “the Social”—Essay #1 due (OCT 11)
Clifford, James

Durkheim, Emile
1984 [1893] Book I: “Introduction” (pp. 1-8); “Chapter I” (pp. 11–30); “Chapter VI” (pp. 126–148); Book III, “Chapter I” (pp. 291–309); “Conclusion” (pp. 329–341). In The Division of Labor in Society. New York: The Free Press.

Durkheim, Emile, and Marcel Mauss

Mauss, Marcel

Week 4: The Boasian Revolution (OCT 18)
Boas, Franz


Week 5: British Social Anthropology: Varieties of Functional Analysis (Oct 25)


Fortes, Meyer, and E.E. Evans-Pritchard

**Week 6: Evolution, Comparison, Ecology: Culture as Adaptive—Essay #2 due (NOV 1)**

Harris, Marvin

Sahlins, Marshall

Steward, Julian

White, Leslie

**Friday seminar: Bronislaw Malinowski, Coral Gardens and Their Magic, vol. 1. (NOV 4)**

**Week 7: Structuralism and Its Translations (NOV 8)**

Doja, Albert

Gluckman, Max
1973 The State of Anthropology. Letter to the Editor (a “found” document).

Leach, Edmund
Lévi-Strauss, Claude

Friday seminar: Claude Lévi-Strauss, Tristes Tropiques. (NOV 11)

Week 8: Culture in Categories, Culture in Winks, Culture in Codes (NOV 22)
Frake, Charles

Geertz, Clifford

Goodenough, Ward

Keesing, Roger

Ortner, Sherry

Rosaldo, Michelle Z.

Week 9: Unbounding Culture—Essay #3 due (NOV 29)
Abu-Lughod, Lila

Appadurai, Arjun

Bunzl, Matti

Clifford, James

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson

Marcus, George

Yanagisako, Sylvia and Carol Delaney

**Week 10: Reflections on Anthropological Knowledge: Anti-, Post- or Non-Socio/Cultural? (DEC 6)**

Boellstorff, Tom

Helmreich, Stefan

Keane, Webb

McDougall, Debra
Strathern, Marilyn

**TAKE-HOME FINAL due emailed to tboellst@uci.edu BY 5pm on Friday, December 14**